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SKYWRITINGS

Newsletter of the *Mid Kent Strut* of the



Mike's Mutterings

Mike Negus -
Editor



Huge Success at Pent Farm Scout Camp enjoyed by Scouts and Strut helpers

Having planned the weekend over the last few months all eyes were on the weather which fortunately obliged and at Pent Farm those Strut members that had generously offered their time and aeroplanes assembled on the Saturday to give the Scouts a chance to earn their Aeronautics and Navigation Badges. Two groups had been selected, one from the Isle of Sheppey and the other from Gillingham numbering some 25 youngsters aged between 13 and 16 boys and girls together with their adult staff.



Young Aviators

With the demise of the Young Eagle programme

and the advent of the Young Aviators scheme in its place it had been proposed that following the entertaining talk from the PFA Scout co-ordinator that this was one area the Strut should direct its expertise and

help particularly with our record of flying youngsters. Fortunately with Chris Reynolds we have someone who having championed the Young Eagles flying was willing to make Pent Farm available for such a weekend.



Ready for a First Flight

Several other Struts, particularly the prolifically active Devon Strut, have held weekends with the Scouts some details of which have appeared in PFA Today and in Popular Flying but there did not appear to be a standard set of documentation that we could follow apart from the protocol of organizing such a weekend which largely fell on the Scouts themselves. What appears missing is a set of notes to use for the ground school element.

By going on to the Scouting Association website it was possible to find out what the requirement was for the individual badges hence we were able to put together some literature and papers for the Scouts to use. In hindsight we were understaffed on the ground school element as once we had started the process the whole idea of the weekend was to get the Scouts flying. In order for

this to happen the boys and girls had to have some instruction to begin with and Nigel Read had put together quite a bit of teaching material which he and I tried to get across to the batches of 6 pupils in fairly quick order. Fortunately Chris Reynolds, our host, had a Cub which was not being used and the Scouts had a real live subject they could handle under strict supervision and sit in so that we could demonstrate what controls did what. It had been decided that we would give them two flights, one to explore the controls so they could experience the effects and the second to experience some of the principles of navigation. These flights were anticipated to take 20 minutes each.

The Scouts had set up camp on Friday night and were obviously up and about by the time we had started to arrive and we awaited to see which of the promised aircraft would make it in. Some of the aircraft resident at Pent Farm were on site and several others flew in so by 10 am flying could start in earnest and the advisory radio set up was in place. The weather was pretty good and apart from a slight cross wind coming from the South



also giving a tail wind component approach and landing over a little stand of trees meant good speed control was required but the more than adequate runway

length meant there was little problem. In fact with the number of aircraft available and the good conditions all of the Scouts had their first flight and we were halfway through the navigation flight by the time we called it a day which certainly took the heat off the Sunday effort.

Time to relax a bit now and we had been watching a pig being roasted on a spit in front of us all day as Chris and family had organized not only food and drink courtesy of the hog roast but entertainment in the shape



of a five piece band playing in the hanger and neighbours and friends had been invited for the evening. Not only this but we were treated to some aerobatics courtesy of a visiting Yak and a Pitts, how good is that what a night !

Anyway all too soon it was off to the

**Don't forget that the
August Meeting is a
Dinner at Rochester
Airfield**

tent for what turned out to be a fitful night courtesy of snoring from certain parties but by all accounts I was as guilty so least said soonest mended. Round about 0700hrs on Sunday the dawn was shattered by the ringing noise of a metal mug being beaten warning us that bacon and eggs was being served by the Scouts and just as we came out of the tent we were treated to the sight of a hot air balloon descending gracefully in to the next field having passed overhead at about 25 feet to disgorge about a dozen passengers ready for their champagne breakfast. Apparently the next door farmer was not too impressed charging the crew £100 to recover their craft. Well it all made for an interesting diversion whilst we enjoyed our breakfast and they were all packed up and gone before our flying commenced for the day.

Things on the flying front having gone so smoothly the previous day we got through



the remaining detail and managed to get the adult helpers flying including one or two who had been a tad reluctant.

Talking to the camp leaders the weekend was hailed a success but as we felt the ground school element had not been completed due to lack of time so it was agreed that when the Scouts returned

from their Summer break several of us would visit them on their meeting nights over a couple of weeks to go through the points we felt needed further explanation. This would allow the award to the Scouts to take place and as a spin off there might be the possibility of a bit of positive publicity in the local paper and elsewhere.



It would be invidious to single out individuals without whom the weekend simply would not have happened as everyone that either flew or assisted at ground level worked very hard to ensure not only an enjoyable weekend but first and foremost a safe weekend so thank you one and all. However, we must offer a vote of thanks not only to Chris but also the family who looked after us all very well and made the stay immensely enjoyable so on behalf of your fellow Strut members, nice one! Thank you. Hopefully we will be able to update the situation with the Scouts as it concludes.

When I read about the evils of drinking, I gave up reading.

August Meeting Dinner at the Airport Café

A reminder that we return to Rochester Airport and the Café for a meal and drink details of which were published in the last Newsletter but for the benefit of those who missed it it will be three courses with Chicken Chasseur as the main event with vegetarian option all for a very reasonable £10 but you need to **get your order in** by contacting our Co-ordinator Derek on 01622 851273 or 07885 298484 so if you haven't already do it now as time will be short by the time you get this. Time is 7.00 for 7.30.

July BBQ at Rochester Airport

Again the weather smiled on our Bar B Q night as it has on most previous years and we were well served by the Airport Café staff who put on a good show and the catering was to a good standard and enjoyed by all.



As everyone is aware by now we are enjoying the 60th anniversary of The

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may cause you to think you can sing.

Popular Flying Association and arrangements had been put in hand for the provision of a suitable cake which was duly cut by our Strut Co-ordinator Derek then passed around the assembled throng and jolly nice it was too.



During the evening a number of us were aware of a developing cumulonimbus which due to the way the light was playing on it was particularly spectacular. Fortunately it was way out to the East and posed no threat to the proceedings and as dusk approached we began to steal away back to our homes and lives.

European Luscombe Fly In at Oaksey Park. (A report from Paddy)

We left Farthing Corner for Rochester as insufficient wind prevented a two up departure so Simon picked me up to continue our trip. A phone call to Oaksey gave poor weather conditions but Brian and John who had decided to visit the fly in, the spectacle of the prettiest aeroplane on the civil register in numbers obviously proving too much to restrain themselves went straight to Oaksey. John turned back as the visibility was deteriorating causing us to drop to 800' five miles from Oaksey. Run down turned out to be uneventful avoiding Brands Hatch as super bikes event meant Aerobatics.

Then we hit the bad visibility as we tracked up a road using it as a line feature out of Swindon to a junction to the left which took us near to lakes which



were close to Oaksey. Unable to see Oaksey Park Simon called to say we were in the vicinity, reply from Oaksey was did we want to take part in the spot landing? Simon's reply was we had to find the field first! Shortly after that call Simon homed in on the field and to



the best of our knowledge as we left early on Sunday Simon won.

Seventeen made the Saturday plus Brian in the Jodel, an RV, Cub, Kitfox, a twin tailed French Nord and an Auster. Before the drinking started but after the Bar-B-Q there was a flour bombing competition and we were one of the first to

get within the circle but it was short lived as our record was broken by an amazing 2m hit from the spot. The Curry in the evening was a great success as this year instead of individual orders we paid a fixed fee of £10.00 and helped ourselves to as much as we wanted. I had three helpings!! Last year the beer ran out early in the evening so this year Nigel and Sally (the organizers and hosts) had got two barrels. Simon did his best to drain the barrels. The evening was very pleasant sitting outside the club house talking and joking even Brian had to admit there were and in his words "SOME PRETTY Aeroplanes around" and they were Luscombes. Sunday morning dawned with not much sleep from night before as Simon with a skinfull snores even louder than normal. Sally did us proud with bacon, eggs, mushrooms and beans for breakfast, all washed down with a cup of tea and after further badinage it was back to dear old Farthing corner.

Eastbourne Airshow

Eight Strut aircraft assembled at Deanland Airfield last Thursday to take part in the Eastbourne Airshow for the



Assembling at Deanland

first time. More aircraft were expected but the weather forecast was very poor

and put off a number of people. In the event, the weather turned out to be more than acceptable. The eight aircraft consisted of Dave Watts and Nigel Read in their respective Europas, Brian Hope, Stephen Solley and John Dean in their Jodels, Frank Rother in his PA22, Simon Pratt in the Luscombe and Gary Smith in his Vagabond.



After a suitable briefing by one of the shows organizers, we left Deanland in quick succession to form a line astern down the Cuckmere Valley to the coast where we descended to low level and flew along the coast past Beachy Head and then along the display line along Eastbourne sea front. I am sure I could see the crowds waving to us and hope it provided some light relief from the more exotic display aircraft.

We then left the TRA and made our way back to our home airfields in glorious weather. Many thanks to Steve Solley for organizing us and we very much hope that we get invited back next year.

I feel sorry for people who don't drink. When they wake up in the morning, that's as good as they're going to feel all day.

Flying for Fun

For those of you not able to get to the Rally, here are a few pictures to show what you missed.



Rutan Defiant

Whilst the weather was not at its best and the tafs were offputting, a large number of aircraft did manage to fly in.



Diesel Engine Thorpe

The consumption of alcohol may cause you to tell your friends over and over again that you love them.

The event this year was intended to return to basics and I believe was successful in this aim.



We must hope that it also managed to make a profit!

Finally and whilst it did not make it to the Rally, it is almost ready to fly as the picture below of Strut member Ian McCloud's Pietenpol shows.



WARNING:

The consumption of alcohol may make you think you are whispering when you are not

Committee Contacts**Co-ordinator: Derek Browning**

Tel : 01622 851273

Mob : 07885 298484

Treasurer:

John Dean 01892 822776

john_dean@tiscali.co.uk**Membership Secretary:**

Graham Hammond 01622 891466

g@twelveacrefarm.freeseve.co.uk**Newsletter Editor:**

Mike Negus 01634 364396

57 Ploughmans Way

Rainham, Kent, ME8 8LH

mike.negus8@blueyonder.co.uk**Committee Members:**

Mark Balding 01580 851112

Brian Hope 01795 662508

Jaqui Clark 01795 830378

Bob Chequer 01634 668276

Stephen Solley 01304 374337

John Knight 01322 529079

Simon Pratt 07973 402986

www.solleysicecreams.co.uk

A poster for a '1940's Hangar Dance'. At the top, it says '1940's Hangar Dance' in large, bold letters. Below that is a photo of John Miller, a man with glasses, wearing a suit and tie, holding a microphone. The text 'John Miller and his Orchestra' is prominently displayed. Below the photo, it says 'Saturday 16th September' and 'Rochester Airport'. Further down, it lists '8 o'clock until 11.30pm', 'Gates at 6.30 Free Dance class at 7.0', 'Tickets £30 including Buffet', and 'Fully Licensed Bar'. At the bottom, it provides contact information: 'Tel: 01634 359 600' and 'www.swh-hangardancepub.co.uk'. There is also a small line of text at the very bottom: 'Presented by the Solleys Farms Real Dairy Ice Cream Co. Ltd.'

The consumption of alcohol is a major factor in dancing like an idiot.

Dates for your Diary

Aug 31	Dinner at EGTO
Oct 1	Abbeville Fly-Out
Sept 28	Talk on building a Rotorway Helicopter under CAA rules